

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The use and misuse of legal and illegal drugs and substances, like other disorders, is a deeply entrenched aspect of our society. Many consequences of substance abuse are quantified in this report. Some events chiefly burden the substance abusers and their families. Others have the potential to suddenly and intractably affect the lives of any of us as unsuspecting victims. Although the societal costs of substance abuse are quantified in economic and statistical terms, personal costs are less tangible. They include broken dreams, potentials never reached, conflict, emotional grief, injury, illness, and death.

Substance abuse is treatable, and thousands of people escape its grip every year by accessing specialized treatment and intervention services. Many other at-risk individuals avoid involvement in substance abuse through prevention services that address environmental hazards and individual needs. Treatment is cost-effective. The federal Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) has compiled studies from a number of states and corporations documenting substantial cost savings from substance abuse treatment, and large reductions in crime. In contrast to the huge annual per capita direct and indirect monetary costs of substance abuse, CSAT estimates that a full continuum of services to treat addictive disorders would cost every American only \$45 per year (61).

A vision of the Missouri Department of Mental Health is that "Missourians shall be free to live their lives and pursue their dreams beyond the limitations of mental illness, developmental disabilities, and alcohol and other drug abuse." One of our challenges is to provide services to those who need our help in order to overcome substance abuse problems. Reducing the impact of alcohol and drug abuse can improve the quality of life for everyone in Missouri.

